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June 14, 1999

Federal Communications Commission

Office of the Secretary

1919 M Street, room 222, NW

Washington, DC 20554

Response to MM Docket 99-25

First, I whole-heartedly welcome the Commission's efforts to extend broadcasting capabilities to those who desire or are only capable of running a smaller radio station. The need for increased minority ownership of stations and for more diverse content of the airwaves is long overdue, and the notice of proposed rule-making , MM Docket 99-25, is appreciated. The Telecommunications Act of 1996, which lifted regulations on station ownership has spawned large-scale consolidation of ownership of radio stations. The tangible result is a loss of radio programming with a unique or local flavor. The intangible result is what implications this consolidation may have now and in the future regarding what issues are allowed by the media to reach the public, to what music the public is exposed, etc. In short, the diversity of perspectives and thought that has for so long been vital for free debate and discourse is threatened by the Telecommunications Act of 1996. MM Docket 99-25 shows a concern for this threat, and that is extremely important.

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There are many positive aspects of the proposal in question. For instance, the restrictions on translator stations, the establishment of a minimum number of operating hours for lpfm stations, the proposed limit of the length of a license, the maintenance of the same environmental protection standards, and the use of standards to prevent interference with other stations, are all very important parts of the proposal. Furthermore, I support the notion that these new lpfm stations should be strictly non-commercial. This, I feel, is integral for promoting diversity on the airwaves. The elimination of application fees and building fees for lpfm stations is also important for ensuring that all members of the community may own a radio station. The fees currently in effect are enough to exclude large segments of the population from radio station ownership. I also support the certification standards for broadcasting equipment in order to make sure that all stations may operate without causing interference. If regular station inspections are necessary, advance warning should be given to the owner of the radio station, and the inspections should concern only the broadcasting equipment and technical standards of broadcasting, not the content of the programming.

I support the idea of the proposed limit on station ownership for the new lpfm stations, although I think that the proposal does not go far enough in this regard. For instance, instead of having a one station, per person, per community ownership restriction, with a 5-10 station limit nationally, a strictly one station per person limit should be implemented. It is blatantly contradictory, on the one hand, to say that you will encourage more diversity of ownership and extend ownership of radio stations to those who presently cannot afford it, while on the other hand, permit individuals to own 5-10 radio stations. Not only does this hinder the fullest diversification of content of the airwaves, it creates an advantage for those who already possess the resources to own one radio station presently, if

they possess the resources to own ten lpfm stations in the future. In other words, the diversification of station ownership, which is one goal of this proposal, would be seriously inhibited. A one station per person restriction on ownership of stations would be most effective in accomplishing the FCC's goals of this proposal.

There are a few troubling aspects of the proposal which are extremely crucial for the acceptance of such a proposal by the American public. First, the proposal forbids the granting of licenses to former unlicensed microradio broadcasters who intentionally defied the orders by the FCC to cease broadcasting. If this policy were to stand, it would be a serious mistake. Not only would the community of unlicensed microradio broadcasters be further agitated by such a policy, but it sets a precedent for judgements of character to be included in criteria for being granted a license. If one of the goals of this proposal is to extend the ability to own a radio station to every citizen, such a policy would completely and totally block the fulfillment of that goal. The community of microbroadcasters, which has been a driving force for the consideration of microradio stations as legitimate by the FCC, would be excluded from benefiting from proposed rulemaking, and they would continue to be a burden for the FCC. This particular policy in the proposal should be eliminated.

Second, there is a large problem with the proposal in that stations with higher power outputs would be given higher priority than those with lower power outputs. In other words, a station broadcasting at 1000 watts would be given priority over a station broadcasting at 10 watts. This policy, also, is counter to the goals of MM Docket 99-25. If the FCC has accurately estimated the potential number of applicants for an lpfm license and the number of stations that could be incorporated into cities' existing FM spectrums, applications for 1000 watt stations would quickly take up the spaces available on the spectrum, leaving no room for

100 watt and 10 watt stations. This would translate into no real change in the diversity of ownership or content of FM radio stations and their broadcasts. The proposal should be changed to give preference to 10 watt and 100 watt stations over 1000 watt stations, since this would best encourage diversification of the airwaves and allow for a maximum number of new radio stations to appear. Again, if this aspect of the proposal is not changed, whatever actual policies may arise from the proposal laid out in MM Docket 99-25 would not be well received, nor would they accomplish the goals of the proposal.

I would like to emphasize the last two objections to the current proposal, as well as my support of the notion that lpfm stations be strictly noncommercial in consideration of the proposed rulemaking. I feel that these three issues are central in the success or failure of the rulemaking. These three issues are also vital in order to ensure that all citizens have an opportunity to own a radio station and in order to ensure that the airwaves do not suffer as a result of consolidation of ownership and homogeneity of content. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Brinson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Peter Brinson